

# Exploring the Relational Responding Task (RRT) as a new approach to measuring the social meaning of language variation

Laura Rosseel, Dirk Speelman, Dirk Geeraerts

For decades, quantitative language attitude research has known little methodological innovation (Rosseel et al., forthcoming). Yet, in the last few years, linguists have started to overcome this deadlock and have turned towards social psychology for new attitude measures. Especially the Implicit Association Test (IAT) has proven a successful new addition to the sociolinguist's toolbox (e.g. Campbell-Kibler, 2012). Despite its relative success, the IAT has a number of limitations, such as the fact that it measures the association between two concepts (e.g. 'I' and 'skinny') without controlling for the relationship between those two concepts (e.g. 'I am skinny' vs. 'I want to be skinny'). The Relational Responding Task (RRT), a novel implicit attitude measure recently developed by social psychologists (De Houwer et al. 2015), makes up for exactly that limitation by presenting participants with full propositions expressing beliefs rather than loose concepts.

In this paper, we present research that explores the RRT as a novel measure of language attitudes. We employ the method alongside a traditional direct rating task to investigate the social meaning of two varieties of Dutch: Standard Belgian Dutch and colloquial Belgian Dutch. In total 391 native speakers of Belgian Dutch took part in the study. Our results show that the latter variety is associated with dynamism, while the former is perceived as prestigious. These results were found both on the implicit level (the RRT results), and on the explicit level (the rating task results). In addition to presenting the results of our study, this paper will reflect upon the usefulness of the RRT as a new measure for sociolinguists to study social meaning of language variation.

Rosseel, L., Speelman, D. & Geeraerts, D. (Forthcoming). Measuring language attitudes using the Personalized Implicit Association Test: A case study on regional varieties of Dutch in Belgium.  
Campbell-Kibler, K. (2012). The Implicit Association Test and sociolinguistic meaning. *Lingua* 122(7): 753–763.

De Houwer, J., Heider, N., Spruyt, A., Roets, A., & Hughes, S. (2015). The relational responding task: toward a new implicit measure of beliefs. *Frontiers in Psychology* 6(article319).